

We must create the day when the teachings of hate and violence and bigotry falls on deaf ears and oppression is replaced by a creed of justice, equality and hope for all humanity.

April 15, 2007

All of us gathered here today feel the absence of Nate Shappel, a survivor who always reminded us of our responsibility to remember the horrors of the past.

We are fortunate to be joined by so many survivors who help tell this important story every day, especially Jona Goldrich, the driving force behind this LA Holocaust Monument, who dedicates his very being to ensuring no tragedy like this ever again occurs.

What have we learned these past 65 years?

We have learned that we must never close our eyes.

We have learned that we must never close our ears.

We have learned that we must never close our mouths.

We have learned that we must NEVER FORGET.

We have learned that we must repeat, over-and-over, NEVER AGAIN!

It is obvious to all who choose not to be blind, who choose not to be deaf, who choose not to be mute, that the next Holocaust, the next genocide, may be lurking just around the corner.

It is happened in Armenia, in Bosnia and Rwanda, it is happening today in Darfur.

People possessed with anger and hatred and a corrupt zeal for power often know no limits, have no mercy, fear no retribution.

Especially when they believe we are not watching, that we are not listening and that we are not speaking out.

We have the responsibility, the obligation to never be distracted and never be silent.

For if not us, who?

We are just days after Jews around the world celebrated the Exodus, the liberation from Mitzrayim.

We are reminded that freedom and liberty come at a price, and a key part of that price is vigilance and remembrance.

We must keep the memory of the Shoah alive. Teach its lessons to our children and our children's children.

We must not allow ourselves to be so engrossed with events around the world, that we lose sight and sound of other places and other horrors.

We must not allow our children to be so absorbed with their Ipods and video games and computers that we fail to teach them the lessons of the horrors of history, lest history repeat itself.

It is our obligation to shout loudly when horrific events occur, when people are subjugated, enslaved and extinguished in the furtherance of one man's power or in the name of some deity.

We must create the day when the teaching of hate and violence and bigotry falls on deaf ears and oppression is replaced by a creed of justice, equality and hope for all humanity.

We must be committed to ending the despoliation of the earth and take responsibility for the stewardship of this magnificent place in which we and our children live.

You and I must lead by example, create a community of freedom, hope and opportunity; join together in the fight against hate, cynicism, selfishness and poverty; we must live the spirit of the values we espouse.

It is our duty to honor the memories of those who perished in the Shoah and in every genocide, and commit ourselves to stand against injustice anywhere in our world.

We must never close our eyes to the sight murder.

We must never close our ears to a plea for help.

We must never close our mouths to voice our opposition to these horrors.

We must NEVER FORGET.

And we must repeat, over-and-over, NEVER AGAIN!

-Lt. Governor Garamendi